

Hennepin HOMES Court

Housing Outreach to Minneapolitans Establishing Stability

Guidelines for Referring Agencies

Purpose:

The purpose of Hennepin HOMES Court is to reduce homelessness and recidivism by offering homeless offenders a positive path to resolve their cases or successfully complete their probation that is based upon participating in services offered by the court's community partners.

Partners:

4th Judicial District: Judge Bruce Peterson

Minneapolis City Attorney's Office: Heidi Johnston

Hennepin County Public Defender's Office: Peter Martin

Hennepin County Probation: Ron Cunningham, Morgan Miller

Community Service Providers:

Catholic Charities (Higher Ground)

Opportunity Center

Our Savior's Community Services

Salvation Army (Harbor Lights)

Simpson Housing Services

St. Stephens Human Services

Calendars:

Hennepin HOMES Court meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month in courtroom 853 of the Hennepin County Government Center at 2:00 p.m.

Eligibility:

Any homeless defendant is eligible who has been charged with a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor by the Minneapolis City Attorney (the defendant either has the misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor charge pending, is on active probation, or has an outstanding bench warrant), who is approved for admission by the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, and

does not have a pending felony charge. ("Homeless" is meant to include individuals who have been homeless but have recently been housed and are in need of services to remain housed.)

Admission and Operating Procedure

Hennepin HOMES Court operates with two separate categories of cases. The court operates as a diversion program for open cases that are approved for admission. The court operates as a problem solving court offering supervision and goal setting for select probation cases.

1. Open Cases

To begin with, HOMES Court will be limited to open cases where a community service partner, or a Hennepin County social worker or advocate, is working with the offender and appears in court with the offender. At the HOMES Court hearing, the city attorney will offer the offender a disposition that includes cooperation with services offered by the community partner or social worker/advocate. If the defendant begins participating in services in good faith, the case will be resolved according to the offer.

Scheduling procedures:

Any community partner or Hennepin County social worker or advocate may schedule a case of one of their clients by emailing Heidi Johnston at Heidi.Johnston@minneapolismn.gov with the name of the client, the case number or summons number, and the requested court date. Ms. Johnston will contact the designated court clerk to arrange for the scheduling of the case on the court calendar.

****If no court date has previously been scheduled, the city attorney will arrange for the first court date to be the date requested by the community partner or social worker/advocate.**

****If a court date already has been scheduled, the community partner or social worker/advocate should attempt to schedule the HOMES Court date in advance of the previously set date. Then if the defendant appears in HOMES Court, the existing court date will be cancelled.**

****If the existing court date precedes the first available date for the service provider, the city attorney will arrange to have the existing date changed to the HOMES Court date. The client then need not appear on the previously set date. (The community partner or social worker/advocate needs to be prepared to verify in court that the client was advised of the new date, so that if the client fails to appear without excuse a warrant can be issued.)**

2. Probation Cases

To begin with, HOMES Court will be limited to select probation cases on the "Downtown 100" list and which Hennepin County Probation and the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office determine would benefit from ongoing judicial supervision. At the plea or sentencing hearing, the probation office, with the consent of the city attorney's office, may ask the sentencing judge to schedule the case on the next available HOMES Court calendar. At the first judicial review in HOMES Court, the court and the probation office will go over the terms of probation with the defendant and determine a schedule of compliance with conditions and judicial review dates to monitor compliance.